

exercise of divine power, but it seems to have been his plan of work to do nothing by super-natural means that could be accomplished by natural ones. He used his divine power sparingly. He was able to walk upon the water, but there is only one instance recorded in which he did so; he went from place to place on the shores of the Sea of Galilee in the fish boats of his disciples. He preferred to suffer hunger rather than employ divine power in the miraculous creation of food, and but twice is there mention made of his having used his power to satisfy the hunger of his followers. He turned water into wine once, but after the marriage feast at Cana there is no record of his ever having done so again. He did not put forth his power to gratify the curiosity of his friends, nor to overthrow his enemies. He wrought no miracles capriciously, nor was he wasteful of the omnipotent energies at his command. Why it was so I do not know, or why he employed human means and efforts to secure that which he might so easily have accomplished by calling to his aid divine power, I do not know. But this was the method of his work, and it has always been so. The super-natural is called into requisition only when the natural is inadequate; God's arm is stretched out when the arm of flesh is too weak. Human skill, human intellect, human effort must be relied upon to work out all human problems that are solvable by such means, for God does for us only what we cannot do for ourselves. It is well for us to pray and to depend upon God, but it is useless for us to expect God to answer our prayers when we hold in our hands the power to answer them ourselves. A practical son heard his pious father ask the Lord to relieve the sufferings of his poor neighbors and said: "Father, give me the keys to the cellar and the smoke-house and I will answer your prayer."

It is right to pray God for an abundant harvest, for he only can give the increase, but such a prayer is worse than useless if we refuse to plow and sow and cultivate for the harvest. It is so with spiritual work. Up to the full measure of our ability, but never beyond it, our success, our development and growth depends upon our own efforts, and when we have reached the limit of human power, then God takes charge of the work. It is good to ask God to enlarge the boundaries of Zion, to increase the church in numbers and usefulness, but that part of the work which he has committed to men must be performed by us. To pray for a revival and not work for it is as illogical as to pray for a harvest and not plow or plant for it.

I do not mean that God is limited to human agency, but it is a well attested fact that he employs human agency in every case in which such means will

avail. When he heals the sick it is not by the direct intervention of super-natural power, but by blessing ordinary remedies and means. It is not an evidence of any lack of confidence in God when you consult a physician when you are sick, or when you seek the safest place you can find in a storm. It shows rather your acquaintance with God's plans and your submission to the divine conditions when you do faithfully what you can and lovingly trust him for the rest. God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

OUR HOPE

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ESTEEMED FRIEND:—Your letter is received. The capacity of man is illimitable. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." I John 3:2. "The greatest study of mankind is man." Made in the image of God, he is God in miniature. The child is a reflection of the Father. Our supreme lesson is holiness. God is himself our teacher: our term of education is eternity. In this life we barely master the alphabet and learn to stammer a few elementary words. We can pronounce God, man, eternity but how much do we know of the real meaning of these deep and wonderful words!

Horace Bushnell was one of the most gigantic minds America ever produced. In the beginning of his ministry he had a dozen problems which he was determined to solve before he leaves the world if God will grant him the full term of life. He died at the age of seventy-four, and at the close acknowledged that he takes his dozen problems into eternity unsolved, with a thousand others added. So it is with the mysteries you propound for consideration. "God alone can comprehend God," and man is his duplicate. Thro all eternity the "principalities and powers in heavenly places" will go to school to Christ to study the dealings of God with man. Eph. 2:6, 7, and 3:9, 10, 11.

Man cannot comprehend his own being and destiny, and how much less can he fathom the infinite and his programme. Faith is the great word of humanity. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Mark 9:23. Jehovah Jireh is the great fact on which faith fastens. Ignorantly, blindly, confidently, joyfully we must move where our omniscient, omnipotent Leader directs, without the quiver of a doubt that he will verify Rom. 8:28, as he did Acts 4:26, 27, 28. There is no greater mystery in Phil. 3:21, than in II Cor. 3:18. The first will take place at the Redeemer's second advent, while the latter is the blessed experience of the saints while in this mortal tabernacle.

"We must be born again." This is imperative, and yet the Savior clearly in-

timates indispensable as it is, that it is wholly beyond our analysis. John 3:7, 8. We can enjoy life without comprehending its mystery. We relish our food and are revived by its assimilation, while we are ignorant of the nature of the complicated process. We know that we live. No metaphysics could convince us to the contrary. Life needs no evidence beyond itself. The Divine life in man is equally self-demonstrative. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12:14. Here is an absolute condition. This fact as a personal experience is as easily determined as health or sickness, pain or pleasure. We know where our sympathies, preferences, aspirations and satisfactions are. "We know that we are of God." I John 5:19. "Hereby know we that dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit." I John 4:13.

This means death to self. Christ and the carnal mind never occupy the same throne simultaneously. "I live yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Gal. 2:20, and John 14:19, 20. The divine purpose includes the glorification of our bodies so that neither death nor decay can ever touch them again. I Cor. 15:51-54, will become a glorious reality. Eternal youth and beauty and rapture are the heritage of all who enshrine the Spirit of Jesus. "We shall see him as he is, and be like him." I John 3:2. This hope enables us to exemplify Matt. 6:11, 12, 44. Children of God live like God. Then Rom. 8:17, 18, will be certain. Let the general inquiry be, IS IT I?

TRUTHS TAUGHT BY CHRISTMAS

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Amid the happiness of our Christmas time we pause to learn the sacred lessons taught by the season.

First.—We come to know that it was the eternal purpose of God to save sinners. We are liable to mistake with reference to the acts of God, viewing them as though they were performed by limited and imperfect beings like ourselves. We are so constituted that we cannot think or speak of events except as occurring in a certain natural order of succession which we call "time". So we are continually in danger of attempting to measure the character of God by the impaired standard of our own circumscribed faculties. We should recollect, however, that the knowledge of our Divine Father is absolute in its nature, and infinite in its extent. The past—that period extending throughout the immeasurable ages that are gone, the present—with its complexity of deed and operation, the future—piercing the ages, and cycles of ages, of that eternity which has yet to come, all lie spread before the Divine mind as one great